



COMET CAPERS

Number 1

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ELECTIONS CANCELLED

As most of you have gathered or intuited, activities have been rather disordered the past few months. However, the chaos has helped to sort things out. One of the efforts sorted out to the dustbin of history is the elections for General Secretaryships and the Official Charter for the group. The membership, in whole and part, has expressed its disinterest in the elections so profoundly that the Board of Governors, suffering its own apathy and attrition, decided January 24, 1979, 10:25 a.m. (PDT) to call them off.

James Heaphy, who thought he sought the General Secretaryship of Antares Chamber, admitted in late December 1978 that for at least six months he would have no time to discharge significant responsibilities. Doc Garvey, current General Secretary for Far Centaurus Chamber, wrote in mid-January in effect a resolution and vote for cancellation of the elections as he admitted that imminent travels or relocation incapacitated his revolutionary effectiveness (i.e., he didn't want to run for [re-] election either). As no one had stepped forward for the General Secretaryship election for Vega Chamber while the current heads of Antares and Vega had been incommunicado for months, Linda Strickler and Graham Maughan decided to vote for Garvey's position. Thus, the final tally is minimally 3 for the motion, 2 possibly against, and 3 abstaining from participation (don't forget we must account for Lane, Mayfield, and Bytof in all these calculations). If this outcome is not satisfactory to the 3 or 4 members who have periodically been excited by the election question, the Board of Governors suggests that he, she, or they circulate a petition for an election amongst the voting membership to see if they can get 60% of those members excited, too. If so, gladly will the Board establish the election machinery. For the moment, the Board has exercised its election responsibility responsibly and need take no other action on it.

No one should think any change has taken place in the leadership. Though Garvey appears incapacitated, others on the Board respect his past efforts, foresee a quick recovery, and thus support his remaining part of the leadership, even if as totem, figurehead, or sacrifice. Certainly the silences of Carol Andrews (G.S. of Antares) and Ivan Clark (G.S. of Vega) will do no more harm if continued for a few more months than they have already done. The abstainers, all appointed by the President, are energetic and preoccupied people whose main concern is building the Space Revolution, not ruling it. In a word, U.F.O.E.S.P. still has the competent leadership it had before the Election Excitation of Lovell, Hedstrom, et. al.

With respect to the charter, the Board would like to encourage the active membership to submit principles or ideas they think should be part of a charter. Though the arbitrary creation of a charter and its submission

to a dormant membership are frivolous actions, the organic creation of a set of principles from the principled political reflections of the most communicative members is a fruitful undertaking which neither takes resources from other, more ambitious projects nor provides illusion or pomposity of progress. In two words, this charter-poll is an economic contribution to U.F.O.E.S.P.'s structural development.

Now it's your turns.

A FEW WORDS ON THE CAPER

For various personal and organizational reasons the leaders and activists of U.F.O.E.S.P. are making new arrangements of commitment to the struggle to settle the Solar System. The Revolution must proceed and one (the major) adaptive measure instituted to exploit these changed circumstances is the division of the old, monthly Morale Booster into two new publications of quarterly and monthly appearance. The quarterly Morale Booster is much like the old MB except that it is consistently longer and less contemporary than previously. The monthly Comet will consist of four or so informal pages of communication and exhortation among the voting members on the progress of the Space Revolution, the development of our capabilities, and the needs of the moment.

The pages of Comet Capers are open to the active membership alone but I expect that the President and Treasurer will do most of the writing as the point of the new publication policy is to give the membership better and quicker information. Only active members (which includes the lifetimes) receive Comet Capers and it will not be available to passives, let alone anyone outside the organization. This distribution pattern is the result of the leadership's conviction that the Comet should be a much freer and less restricted forum than even the old MB. For example, discussions like the classic "Lovell-Maughan exchanges" would now appear in CC rather than Morale Booster. The purpose of CC is not rampant controversy but frank and uninhibited discussion.

Beyond discussion, the Comet will feature plans and instructions for the Space Revolution. Thus much of what has appeared in the series of POW articles would now appear here, leaving the reportage for the pages of MB. As one of the purposes of CC is the stimulation of closer, personal contacts within the membership, the publication will have features occasionally on the specific and special activities of various cadres with ideas on how different ones of us can work together for space. There will be nothing fancy about Comet Capers, just, hopefully, solid immersion in the Space Revolution.

THE FIRST GREAT NEED OF THE MOMENT

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Having said a few words about this publication, it is appropriate to say some things about the nature of U.F.O.E.S.P., its membership, and the resources essential to our work. Unlike all other spacer organizations, United For Our Expanded Space Programs is fully and openly in the political action business and the political environment. As our first purpose is not education, we are not tax-exempt and, consequently, money given to the group by membership or donation is not tax-exempt either. Most of you have heard this story before but it has special relevance now as we are in most dire need of some additions to the Treasury. An educational outfit can offer a direct quid pro quo to its members: you give this money, you get these materials; you give this money, you get a tax-write off. But

the quid pro quo with political groups is indirect: you give this money, you get this satisfaction of (eventual) influence on the running of things. Political groups, such as ourselves, trade in dreams and their concrete expression. Sometimes those dreams are fairly petty and people rightly complain about "politicos" and their self-serving operations. Yet the political aspirations of people can also be progressive, idealistic, or grandiose, giving rise to progress, ideals, and grandeur. The material gains of membership in a political group like U.F.O.E.S.P. are secondary to the social and psychic rewards of making history.

Thus one joins a political group knowing that the best rewards arise from paying more than simple dues. Donations and offerings of goods, money and services beyond simple dues lead to the richest social and psychic benefits. Ain't mumbo-jumbo, man, it's true life. Another way of looking at the situation is to understand the social rewards as power. When the scale of activities is as grass-roots as ours and the political group as numerous as U.F.O.E.S.P., talk of power and history seems exaggerated. But it only seems so. Without the exercise of a commanding style the political activist or organization cannot acquire the confidence, poise, or experience to take ever bigger risks for ever greater gains, power.

We come to the pitch: we need money to insure productivity. The income U.F.O.E.S.P. gets comes from two main sources: memberships. . . and Graham M. and Linda S. In about equal measure one should add. This observation is not for the egos of Graham and Linda but for the edification of you, dear voting members and readers. As long as no untoward events occur to disrupt their finances, then their steady contributions of \$50 or more per month take up the slack. Alas, today finds them (us!) in quite untoward straits. Most important of the many changes in their financial picture is the unavoidable alternative of spending perhaps as much as \$2,000 in the next year to save and repair the President's mouth. It doesn't take complicated mathematics to conclude that their ability to subsidize the group at past levels has all but disappeared for the immediate future. Darkening the picture are the slow renewal rate of expired members and the curtailment of convention activity of the best cadres as a result of new educational obligations. U.F.O.E.S.P. sorely needs a shot in the arm of a few hundred dollars. Without this financial transfusion the org will proceed but in an enervated or debilitated condition.

The most obvious way to cope with this predicament is the fantasy of every (active) member donating two or three or five dollars to the war chest. Anyone who can spare, right now, such a small sum for the stars, for the whole universe if we want it, should IMMEDIATELY get the donation together and send it to Headquarters. However, there are other equally good ways to contribute to the cause. Some of them involve membership renewal. One can stop wavering on the question and straightaway renew. Or a person might upgrade the membership he or she was going to renew anyway. Gerda Oberg made her donation by renewing for three years even though her membership just started. Besides personal renewal there is the option of persuading some friend, relative, or acquaintance to join the vanguard of the Space Revolution, U.F.O.E.S.P.

That's not all. The money we need goes for specific purposes: postage, printing, delegation expenses (memberships, tables), and supplies. Those who contribute goods such as stamps, envelopes, stationery or services such as transportation, wholesale printing, free advertising, to name only a few examples of each category, save the group's having to purchase them. Everyone's situation is unique so some people can get one thing cheaply while others can get different things at a bargain. With hard thought and full commitment to the Space Revolution, every member can make the difference in our work. Come on comrades; cough up! You'll have the glory a lot longer than you will the money!

BRIGHTON BLUES

The 37th World Science-Fiction Convention takes place this year in Brighton, England. Although the worldcon is an important event for the organization's membership efforts, this year the convention has special significance for us. Spacers from all over Europe as well as North America will attend the English worldcon. Seacon '79 is an unprecedented opportunity for U.F.O.E.S.P. to build the Space Revolution internationally. Though we concentrate on the space program of the U.S. for direct action, peace and prosperity in the Solar System are impossible without an international revolutionary movement for space. Thus for months the Board of Governors has made a delegation to Seacon '79 one of the two projects with highest priority (Space Day 3 is the other). The Board has decided that CHRYSE-3 should go overseas with the worldcon to take advantage of the international prospects and to save resources again through consolidation with the worldcon.

As one would expect, the sudden changes in the fortunes of Maughan and Strickler affect all of U.F.O.E.S.P.'s projects so Brighton is much shakier now than ever before. We think a delegation is imperative so every member who is making plans to go should keep at them. Carrie Mayfield and Steve Nall are two such members of whom we know. Even if one doesn't think one can make it to England, one should try. The idea is to work for this delegation communally by planning for it individually. Let's say 10 members want to work the Revolution in Brighton, of whom 4 or 5 have a serious chance of making it. For argument, in the end let's assume only 2 people can attend independently. If the remaining 7 or 8 members were to donate part of their funds to the delegation because they had not been able to gather sufficient resources to attend on their own, not only would the delegation be stronger or larger but the ones who couldn't go would have savings they otherwise (probably) would not have (i.e., they would have spent it all in the interim without the goal of Brighton). How this works in detail will be told in the next installment of CC but here is a thought to get the ball rolling: Graham M. and Linda S. have reserved a flat for two weeks around the con for which the first week is paid and they consider it part of the "pool." As we have seen, their financial chances of making the trip are small. No matter. Somehow a delegation to Seacon '79 must be sent.

Catch you next Comet.

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